

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested. Instead of continuing the appeal, applicants wish to prosecute the application on the basis of amended claims and with the addition into the record of a Rule 132 declaration.

Claims 8-12, 14 and 15 are now in the application. Claims 8, 14 and 15 have been amended. Claim 13 has been canceled and its subject matter has been incorporated into claim 8.

Kindly enter the enclosed Declaration under 37 CFR § 1.132. The declarant, Dr. Lorenz Sigl, is a highly recognized expert in the pertinent field. Please note that Dr. Sigl is employed by the corporate assignee of the instant application. It should be clear, however, that all "opinions" contained in the declaration are fully supported by objective evidence and that all conclusions in the declaration are technically unassailable.

The statements contained in the declaration support applicants' previously made arguments and they clearly explain why the claimed invention is patentable over the art of record.

Our prior arguments are herewith incorporated by reference. In addition, we once more wish to address the secondary reference Koga (US 6,527,338 B1). There, the protrusions (6a) are either formed by way of the plate insert 2 of Figs. 1 and 5 or by way of the plate insert 2 of Fig. 6. The former plate has straight bores 2a, while the

latter has inclined, conical bores 2a. The two embodiments represent alternatives. There is nothing in Koga – nor in any other reference, for that matter – that would suggest two different angles of inclination for the protrusions to be formed in two different pressing steps.

Claim 8 calls for a second pressing step in which “the angle of inclination [of the elevations is] increased” relative to an angle of inclination formed in the first pressing step. The prior art does not disclose such a process sequence.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and the allowance of claims 8-12, 14 and 15 are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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